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ABSTRACT

This book recounts the 1960's struggle of Mercer University, a historic Southern Baptist university in Georgia, to confront racism and cultural change. The account focuses on Sam Oni, an African and the first black student admitted to Mercer. Oni was also a Southern Baptist, a product of Mercer missionaries to Africa. In a pivotal incident when he was a student, Oni was denied entrance to the Southern Baptist church on the Mercer campus. In 21 chapters the narrative shares the views of key players in the events including local judges, university administrators, former students, church officials, and community members. Central to the analysis is continuing reflection on the conflict between the religious teaching of the Southern Baptists and the social intolerance of American society. The final chapter describes the 1994 return of Sam Oni to Mercer for the University's celebration of the 30 year anniversary of desegregation there. (JB)

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